



RiverFirst

Creating visionary parks on the Mississippi riverfront

FACT SHEET

Easily accessible from anywhere in the Twin Cities, the Upper Riverfront is a nearly untapped resource for natural area restoration, recreation, and entertainment. When realized, RiverFirst will give the community four new riverfront parks, interconnected via several miles of new riverfront trail loops and connected to three existing regional and national parks and thousands of miles of roads and trails.

Quick Facts

- 5.5 miles of the upper Mississippi River
- 11 miles of "America's fourth coast"
- 4 new interconnected riverfront parks
- 3 new riverfront trail loops and related projects
- 23 acres of new riverfront park
- 3 linked regional/national parks
- 4 linked regional/national trails or byways
- 5 – 10 years phased Priority Project completion
- 2017 first project ground-breaking (Hall's Island)

Goals & Benefits

- Establish parks as the engine for renewed economic development.
- Transform the Mississippi from a barrier to a connector.
- Refocus the region toward one of the three great rivers of the world and the natural amenity that shapes our civic identity.

Projects

Riverfront Destinations

Hall's Island-Scherer site
Great Northern Greenway River Link
Water Works
Upper Harbor Terminal

Park Connections & Trails

East Bank Trail
Great Northern Greenway
Plymouth Ave Bridge Greening Trail Loops

Managing Partners

RiverFirst is a multi-agency initiative transform the Mississippi riverfront through visionary parks and trails, led by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board with the Minneapolis Parks Foundation.

Contribute

Minneapolis is the top-ranked parks system in the nation. From its inception, public-private partnership made our world-class park system possible and helped it thrive for 130 years. The new parks you help create today will live on for generations.

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RiverFirst: Advanced Parks Design

RiverFirst projects will perform as part of a more resilient infrastructure, while also serving parks users as new urban recreation, natural area, and entertainment destinations on the Mississippi River.



RiverFirst Initiative

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Great Northern Greenway River Link

26th Ave N Overlook

Project Description

Located at the eastern end of the newly-completed 26th Ave N bike and pedestrian trail, the Great Northern Greenway River Link will celebrate community members' arrival at the Mississippi River with compelling public space featuring views, art, lighting, furniture, and interactive experiences.

The Great Northern Greenway will transform what is currently an unsightly and inaccessible dead-end street, where dense vegetation and a chain link fence blocks the river, into a new "North Bank" park. It is also a major step in transforming the entire river corridor through North Minneapolis into public parkland, parkway, and trails.

The project name is derived from its relationship to the Great Northern Greenway, a cross-Minneapolis trail advocated for by community and encompassing the 26th Ave N trail and existing and forthcoming trails in Northeast Minneapolis. Future phases of the Great Northern Greenway River Link will seek to expand the park south to Ole Olson Park and across the river at or near the BNSF railroad bridge.



Project Phasing

The River Link is expected to be developed in three phases, beginning with the creation of the 26th Ave N Overlook in 2019. Future development envisions a trail connection to Ole Olson Park and across the Mississippi River.

Key Milestones

- 2016-2017 – Community engagement and design visioning, in partnership with Juxtaposition Arts
- 2018 – Ongoing community engagement and design visioning with JXTA; design team begins work
- 2019 – Construction start and grand opening

Linked Public Assets

- Farview and Ole Olson Parks
- Grand Rounds National Byway
- Mississippi National River & Recreation Area
- Mississippi River National Trail
- Nellie Stone Johnson School
- Regional trail network

Design Team

TEN x TEN Landscape Architecture and 4RM+ULA Architecture with EOR, Schuler Shook, Mattson MacDonald Young, MEP, and CPMI

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Water Works

Design Concept

Water Works is a transformative park development project overlooking St. Anthony Falls and the Stone Arch Bridge that will bring significant new historic, cultural, and recreational amenities to the most iconic location in Minneapolis and the region.

The Water Works concept embeds a new park pavilion into the historic ruins of the Bassett mill, as well as expands naturalized gathering spaces with direct access to public amenities.

The Water Works site is in the Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park, the third most popular park in Minneapolis with over 2.5 million visits annually and will expand and enhance the experience of the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board's Mill Ruins Park.

A Natural Venue for Storytelling

Water Works is conceived as a place to express embedded histories, share stories, and make new memories. The design uniquely captures the site's potential as a place to reveal untold narratives, in acknowledgement of St. Anthony



Falls as both the birthplace of the city's milling history and a spiritual place that has shaped cultural and economic connections for indigenous people and immigrants.

Visitors to Water Works will experience history and find opportunities for storytelling in the mill-embedded pavilion, tree-sheltered city steps, a naturalized playspace, and revealed mill-era remnants and artifacts.

Restaurant and Event Venue

In 2017, The Minneapolis Park Board and Minneapolis Parks Foundation announced the intent to partner with The Sioux Chef on the Water Works restaurant and event venue. In addition, The



Sioux Chef will work with the Water Works design team to create places within the park to grow native plants traditionally used for food and medicine. The Sioux Chef also plans to create events and educational opportunities about Native American cultures and food systems.

Location & Scope

- Core site of five acres, owned by the Minneapolis Park Board.
- Site is bound by Third Ave. and Portland Ave., and Second St. and the Mississippi River.
- 2.5 million visits annually as part of the Central Mississippi Riverfront Regional Park.
- Within the St. Anthony Falls Heritage Zone and the Mississippi National River & Recreation Area.
- Adjacent to the growing mixed-use Mill District and within walking distance of downtown business and entertainment districts and the new Vikings stadium.
- Complex project area encompasses multiple built and natural features under the jurisdiction of local, state, and federal agencies, such as the City of Minneapolis and the National Park Service.

Design Team

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board and the Minneapolis Parks Foundation are developing Water Works with a 12-member multidisciplinary design team led by:

Damon Farber Landscape
Architects
HGA Architects
106 Group



Phasing & Cost

Water Works will be developed in two phases over seven years:

- **Mezzanine Phase 1** (2 acres) will commence full construction in 2019 and conclude in 2020; preparatory activities, including the deconstruction of the former Fuji Ya restaurant, began in 2017.
- **Riverside Phase 2** (3 acres) will commence construction in 2021 and conclude in 2023.
- Total cost for both phases is estimated at \$29.9M; \$19.7M for Mezzanine Phase 1 and \$10.2M for Riverside Phase 2.
- Private philanthropy is expected to contribute \$17.9M to the project.

Programming & Amenities

- Outdoor gathering space for environmental education, historic interpretation, and performance.
- Year-round park pavilion with a restaurant, gathering/rental space, and restrooms.
- Naturalized play areas.
- Greenspace featuring native tree groves and plantings.
- Activation and conservation of mill remnants throughout the site.
- Excavation, conservation, and interpretation of the historic gatehouse and canal.
- Interactive water features, including a shallow pool for wading and skating and skim fountains.
- Pavilion green roof and overlook.